T. Secker

A

Wedding-Ring

Fit for the

FINGER:

Or, the salve of

DIVINITY

On the sore of

HUMANITY.

Laid open in a Sermon at a Wedding in *Edmonton*, by *William Secker* Preacher of the Gospel.

To which is adjoyned, *The none-such Professor in his Meridian Splendor.* Or, *The singular allisions of Sanctified Christians*; being the substance of seven Sermons, on *Mat.* 5. 47. By the same Author.

London, Printed for *Thomas Parkhurst* at the three Crowns over against the great Conduit in Cheapside. 1660.

Christian Reader.

IT is not good weighing ones worth in such unequal ballances, where the feather of opinion turns the Scales. One spoke can never stand still, whilst the whole wheel turns round. The gifts and graces of Christians lay in common till envy made the first inclosure. Here thou mayest shew thy wisdom in spinning a fine thread out of course wool. Do not hurt him by thy malice, who would help thee in thy Marriage. Who would plant a piece of Ordnance to beat down an aspen leaf, which having always the palsie, will fall alone? This piece neither desires supplanters, nor deserves supporters. It comes forth as a pressed Souldier, not as a Volunteer, what

it was in Preaching, it is in publiſhing ;
There is not one cubit added to its ſta-
ture, to ſecure it from the Avenger of
blood, it flies to thy City of refuge. Let
him who ſowes his pains, reap thy
prayers.

Thine in the
Lord Ieſus

William Secker.

Gen

GEN. 2. 18.

And the Lord God said, It is not good that the Man should be alone, I will make him a help meet for him.

HUmane misery is to Divine mercy, as a black foil to a sparkling diamond, or as a sable cloud to the Sun beams. Psal. 8. 4. *Lord what is man that thou art mindeful of him!* man is,

In his Creation, Angelical.
In his Corruption, Diabolical.
In his Renovation, Theological.
In his Translation, Majestical.

An Angel in *Eden*.
A Devil in the World.
A Saint in the Church.
A King in Heaven.

There were four silver Channels in which the chrystal streams of Gods affection ran to man in his Creation.

1. In his Preparation.
2. In his Assimilation.

3. In his Coronation.
4. In his Association.

1. In his *Preparation*: Other Creatures received the Charter of their beings by a ſimple *fiat*; but there was a conſultation at his forming, not for the difficulty, but for the dignity of the work. The Painter is moſt ſtudious about that which he means to make his maſter-piece. The four Elements were taken out of their Elements to make up the perfection of mans complexion: The Fire was purified, the Air was clarified, the Water was purged, the Earth was refined; when Man was moulded, Heaven and Earth was married; a Body from the one was eſpouſed to a Soul from the other.

2. In his *Aſſimilation*: Other Creatures were made like themſelves, but Man was made like God, as the wax hath the impreſſion of the ſeal ſet upon it. It is admirable to behold ſo fair a picture in ſuch courſe canvas, and ſo bright a character in ſo brown paper.

3. In his *Coronation*; He that made man and all the reſt, made man over all the reſt. *quantillum Dominum poſuit Deus & tantum dominium*, he was a little Lord of a great Lordſhip; this King was crowned in his cradle.

4. In his *Aſſociation*: Society is the ſolace of humanity: The world would be a deſart without a conſort.

Moſt of mens parts are made in pairs; now

now he that was double in his perfection, muſt not be ſingle in his condition, *and the Lord God ſaid, &c.*

Theſe words are like the Iron gate that opened to *Peter* of it's own accord, dividing themſelves into three parts.

1. An introduction, *and the Lord God ſaid.*

2. An aſſertion, *'tis not good that man ſhould be alone.*

3. A determination, *I will make an help meet for him.*

In the firſt, there's a Majeſty propoſed.

In the ſecond, there's a malady preſented.

In the third, there's a remedy provided.

Once more let me put theſe grapes into the preſs.

1. The ſoveraignneſs of the expreſſion, *and the Lord God ſaid.*

2. The ſolitarineſs of the condition, *'tis not good, &c.*

3. The ſutableneſs of the proviſion, *I will make, &c.*

In the [illegible] there's the worth of *veracity.*

In the ſecond, there's the want of *ſociety.*

In the third, there's the work of *divinity.*

Of theſe in their order.

And firſt of the firſt.

First, The Soveraignneſs of the expreſſi-
and the Lord God ſaid.

Luk: 1. 70. As he ſpake by the mouth of his Prophets. In other Scriptures he uſed their mouthes, but in this he makes uſe of his own: they were the Organs, and he the Breath; the early ſtreames, and he the Fountain. How he ſpake tis hard to be ſpoken, whether eternally or internally or externally *Quomodo non eſt quod quaramus, ſed potius quid dixerit intelligamus*, we are not to enquire to the manner of ſpeaking, but to the matter that's ſpoken, which leads me like a directing ſtar from the Suburbs to the City, from the Porch to the Palace, from the Founder of the Mine, to the Treaſure that is in it, *It is not good, &c.*

In which you have two things.

1. The ſubject.
2. The predicate.

The ſubject, *man alone.*

The predicate, *tis not good, &c.*

First, the ſubject *man alone*, take this in two branches.

1. As it is limited to one m[illegible]
2. As it is lengthened to a[illegible].

First, as tis limited to one man, and ſo it is taken particularly, man for the firſt man. When all other creatures had their mates, *Adam* wanted his: Though he was the Emperour of the earth, and the

Admi-

Admiral of the Seas, yet in Paradiſe without a Companion, though he was truely happy yet he was not fully happy; Though he had enough for his board, yet he had not enough for his bed; Though he had many creatures to ſerve him, yet he wanted a creature to ſolace him; when he was compounded in Creation, he muſt be compleated by conjunction; when he had no ſin to hurt him, then he muſt have a Wife to help him; *It is not good that man ſhould be alone.*

Secondly, as it's lengthned to all men, and ſo it's taken univerſally, *Heb.* 13. 4. *Marriage is honorable unto all*, not onely τὸ γαμος but τιμιος. Its not onely warrantable, but honorable. The whole Trinity hath conſpired together to ſet a Crown of glory upon the head of Matrimony.

1. *God the Father*: Marriage was a Tree planted within the Walls of Paradiſe, this flower firſt grew in Gods Garden.

2. *The Son*: Marriage is a Chriſtal glaſs wherein Chriſt and the Saints do ſee each others faces.

3. *The Holy Ghoſt*, by his overſhadowing of the bleſſed Virgin. Well might the World when it ſaw her pregnancy, ſuſpect her Virginity, but her Matrimonial condition was a grave to that ſuſpicion, without this her innocency had not prevented her im-

infamy; she needed a shield to defend that chastity abroad, which was kept inviolable at home.

Too that many have not worth enough to preserve their virginity, have yet will enough to cover their unchastity; turning the medicine of frailty into the mantle of filthiness. Certainly she is mad that cuts off her leg to get her a crutch, or that venomes her face to wear a Mask.

St. *Paul* makes it one of the Characters of those that should cashier the faith, 1 *Tim.* 4. 3. Not to forbear Marriage, which may be lawful, but to forbid it, which is sinful.

One of the Popes of *Rome*, sprinkles this unholy drop upon it, *carnis pollutionem & immunditiem.*

It's strange, that should be a pollution, which was instituted before corruption; or that impurity, which was ordeined in the state of innocency; or that they should make that to be a sin which they make to be a Sacrament.

But a Bastard may be laid at the door of chastity; and a leaden crown set upon a golden head.

Bellarmine that mighty *Atlas* of the Papal power, blows his stinking breath upon it, saying, better were it for a Priest to defile himself with many Harlots, then to be Married to one Wife. These children of the purple Whore prefer their Monasteries before our

Marria-

Marriages; a Concubine before a companion. They uſe too many for their luſts, to chooſe any for their love: Their Tables are ſo largely ſpread, that they can't feed upon one diſh.

As for their exalting of a Virgin-ſtate, it's like him that commended faſting when he had fill'd his belly.

Who knows not that Virginity is a pearl of ſparkling luſtre? But cannot the one be ſet up, without the other be thrown down? will no oblation pacifie the former, but the demoliſhing of the latter? Though we find many enemies to the choice of Marriage, yet its rare to find any enemies to the uſe of Marriage. They would pick the lock that want the key, and pluck the fruit that do not plant the Tree.

The *Hebrews* have a ſaying, *he is not a man that hath not a Woman.*

Though they clime too high a bough; yet its to be feared that ſuch fleſh is full of imperfection that is not tending to propagation; Though man alone may be good, yet *it is not good that man ſhould be alone*; which leads me from the ſubject to the predicate, *It is not good, &c.*

Non bonum, is not in this place as *malum*, but *bonum eſt honeſtum, utile, jucundum.*

Now it is not good that man ſhould be in a ſingle condition, upon a threefold conſideration.

1. In

1. In respect of sin, which would not else be prevented. Marriage is like water, to quench the sparks of lusts fire, 1 *Cor.* 7. 2. *Nevertheless to avoid fornication, let every one have his own Wife, &c.* Man needed no such physick when he was in perfect health. Temptations may break natures best fence, and lay its Paradice waste, but a single life is a prison of unruly desires, which is daily attempted to be broken open.

Some indeed force themselves to a single life meerly to avoid the charges of a Married state; they had rather fry in the grease of their own sensuality, then extinguish those flames with an allowed remedy; *Its better to marry then to burn:* to be lawfully coupled, than to be lustfully scorched. It's best feeding these flames with ordinate fewel.

2. Tis not good in respect of manking, which then would not be propagated. The *Roman* Historian relating the ravishing of the *Sabine* Women, excused it thus: *Res erat unius ætatis populus virorum*, without them man kind would fall from the earth and perish. Marriages do turn mutability into the image of eternity: it springs up new buds, when the old are withered. It's a greater honour for a man to be the father of one son, then to be the Master of many servants. Without a wife, children cannot be had

had lawfully; without a good wife children cannot be had comfortably. Man and Woman as the ſtock and the ſcien, being grafted Marriage, are trees bearing fruit to the world.

S. *Auguſtine* ſayes, this pair is, *primum par & fundamentum ominum, &c.*

They are the firſt linck of humane ſociety to which all the reſt are joyned. Mankind had long ago decayed and been like a Taper fallen into the ſocket, if thoſe breaches which are made by mortality were not repaired by Matrimomy.

3. Tis not good in regard of the Church, which could not then have been expatiated. Where there is no generation, there can be no regeneration:

Nature makes us Creatures, before grace makes us Chriſtians.

If the loins of men had been leſs fruitful the death of Chriſt would have been leſs ſucceſsful.

It was a witty queſtion that one put to him that ſaid, Marriages fils the earth, but Virginity fils the Heavens. How can the heavens be full, if the Earth bee empty?

Had *Adam* lived in Innocency without matrimony, there would have been no ſervants of God in the Church Militant, nor no Saints with God in the Church Triumphant. But I will not ſink this Veſſel by the over-burdening of it, nor preſs this truth

truth to death by laying too great a load upon its shou'ders.

There is one knot which I must unty before I make a farther progress, 1 *Cor.* 7. 1. *It is good for a man not to touch a Woman.*

Do all the Scriptures proceed out of the same mouth, and do they not all speak the same truth? the God of unity will not indite discord, and the God of verity cannot assert falsehood. If good and evil be contraries, how contrary then are these Scriptures? Either *Moses* mistakes God, or *Paul* mistakes *Moses* about the point of marriage.

To which I shall give a double answer.

1. There is a publique and a private good. In respect of one man, it may be good not to touch a Woman, but in respect of all, *So it is not good that the man should be alone.*

2. *Moses* speaks of the state of man created, *Paul* of the state of man corrupted: now that which by institution was a mercy, may by corruption become a misery; as pure water is tainted by running through a miry channel; or as the Sun-beames receive a tincture by shining through a coloured glass. There's no print of evil in the World, but sin was the stamp that made it. They that seek nothing but weal in its commission, will find nothing but wo in the conclusion. Which leads me from the solitarines

tarineſs of the condition, *man alone*, to the ſutableneſs of the proviſion, *I will make an help meet for him.*

In which you have two parts.

1. The Agent, *I will make.*
2. The object, *a help.*

Firſt, The Agent, *I will make.*

We cannot build a houſe without tools, but the Trinity is at liberty.

Dic verbum tantum.

To Gods omniſcience there's nothing inviſible, and to Gods omnipotence ther's nothing impoſſible.

We work by hands without, but he works without hands. He that made man meet for help, makes a meet help for man.

Marriages are conſented above, but conſummated below. *Prov.* 18.22. Though man wants ſupply, yet man cannot ſupply his wants. *James* 1. 17. *Every good and perfect gift comes from above, &c.* A Wife though ſhe be not a perfect gift, yet ſhe is a good gift. Theſe beams are darted from the ſun of righteouſneſs.

Haſt thou a ſoft heart? it's of Gods breaking: Haſt thou a ſweet wife? ſhee's of Gods making.

Let me draw up this expreſſion with a double application.

1. When thou layeſt out for ſuch a good

on

on earth, look up to the God of Heaven. Let him make thy choice for thee who hath made his choice of thee. Look above you before you look about you. Nothing makes up the happiness of a married condition like the holiness of a mortified disposition. Account not those the most worthy, that are the most wealthy. Art thou matched to the Lord? match in the Lord. How happy are such marriages where Christ is at the Wedding; Let none but those who have found favour in Gods eyes, find favour in yours.

2. Give God the tribute of your gratulation for your good companions. Take heed of paying your Rent to a wrong Land-Lord. When you taste of the stream, reflect on the spring that feeds it. Now thou hast four eyes for thy speculation, four hands for thy operation, four feet for thy ambulation, and four shoulders for thy sustentation. What the sin against the Holy Ghost is in point of divinity, that is unthankfulness in point of morality; an offence unpardonable. Pity it is but that Moon should be ever in an Eclipse that will not acknowledge her beams to be borrowed from the Sun. He that praises not the giver, prizes not the gift, and so I pass from the Agent to the Object, *a help*.

She must be so much, and no less, and so much and no more. Our ribs were not ordained

dained to be our Rulers. They are not made of the head to claim superiority, but out of the side to be content with equality. They desert the Author of nature, that invert the order of nature. The Woman was made for the mans comfort, but the man was not made for the Womans command. Those shoulders aspire too high, that content not themselves with a room below their head. Its between a man and his Wife in the house, as it is between the Sun and the Moon in the heavens, when the greater light goes down, the lesser light gets up; when the one ends in setting, the other begins in shining. The Wife may be a Soveraign in her Husbands absence, but she must be subject in her Husbands presence. As *Pharaoh* said to *Joseph*, so should the Husband say to his Wife, *Gen.* 41. 40. Thou shalt be over my house, and according to thy Word shall all my people be ruled, onely in the Throne will I be greater then thou. The body of that houshold can never make any good motion, whose bones are out of place. The Woman must be a help to the Man in these four things.

1. To his *Piety*. 2. To his *Society*.
3. To his *Progeny*. 4. To his *Prosperity*.

To his *Piety* by the ferventness of her excitation. To his *Society* by the fragrantness of her conversation. To his *Progeny* by the fruitfulness of her education. To his *Prosperity* by the faithfulness of her preservation.

1. To his *Piety* by the ferventness of her excitation, 1 *Pet.* 3. 7.

Husband and Wife ſhould be as the two Milch-kine, which were coupled together to carry the Ark of God; or as the two Cherubims that look't one upon another, and both upon the Mercy Seat: or as the two tables of ſtone, on each of which were engraven the Laws of God. In ſome families married perſons are like *Jeremiahs* two baſkets of figs, one very good, the other very evil; or like fire and water, whilſt the one is flaming in devotion, the other is freezing in corruption. There is a twofold hindrance of holineſs; firſt, of the right ſide; ſecondly, on the left; on the right ſide, when the Wife would run in Gods way, the Husband will not let her go: when the fore-horſe in a team will not draw he wrongs all the reſt; when the General of an Army forbids a March, all the Souldiers ſtand ſtill, ſometimes on the left; How did *Salomons* Idolatrous Wife, draw away his heart from Heaven? A ſinning Wife was Satans firſt Ladder, by which he ſcaled the Walls of Paradice, and took away the Fort-Royal of *Adams* heart from him. Thus ſhe that ſhould have been the help of his fleſh, was the hurt of his Faith: His natures under propper, becomes his graces underminer; and ſhe that ſhould be a Crown on the head, is a croſs on the ſhoulders. The wife is often to the husband as the Ivy is to the Oak, which draws away his ſap from him

2. A help to his ſociety by the fragrantneſs of her converſation.

Man is an affectionate creature, now the Womans behaviour ſhould be ſuch towards the man, as to requite his affection by increaſing his delectation. That the new-born love may not be blaſted, as ſoon as its bloſſomed; that it may not be ruined before it be rooted. A Spouſe ſhould carry her ſelf ſo to her Husband as not to diſturb his love by her contention, nor to deſtroy his love by her alienation. Husband and wife ſhould be like two candles burning together, which makes the houſe more lightſome, or like two fragrant flowers bound up in one Noſegay that augment it's ſweetneſs; or like two well tuned inſtruments, which ſounding together, makes the more melodious muſick. Husband and Wife, what are they but as two ſprings meeting, and ſo joyning their ſtreams that they make but one currant? 'T's an unpleaſing ſpectacle to view any contention in this Conjunction.

3. To his *Progeny* by the fruitfulneſs of her education, that ſo her Children in the fleſh, may be Gods Children in the Spirit. *Sam.* 1. 11. *Hanna* ſhe vows if the Lord will give her a Son by bearing him, ſhe will return that Son to the Lord by ſerving him. A Spouſe ſhould be more careful of her childrens breeding, then ſhe ſhould be fearful of her childrens bearing. Take heed leaſt

these flowers grow in the Devils Garden. Though you bring them out in corruption, yet do not bring them up to damnation. Those are not Mothers but Monsters, that whil'st they should be teaching their Children the way to Heaven with their lips, are leading them the way to hell with their lives.

Good education is the best livery you can give them living, and its the best Legacy you can leave them dying. You let out your cares to make them great, & lift up your prayers to make them good. That before you dy from them, you may see Christ live in them.

Whil'st these twigs are green and tender they should be bowed towards God. Children and Servants are in a family as Passengers are in a Boat; Husband and Wife they are as a pair of Oares, to row them to their desired Haven. Let these small peices of Timber be hewed, and squared for the Cælestial building. By putting a Scepter of grace into their hands, you will set a Crown of glory upon their heads.

4. A help to his Prosperity by her faithful preservation, being not a Wandrer abroad but a Worker at home.

One of the Antiens speaks excellently; She must not be a Field-Wife like

Dina

Dinah; nor a Street-Wife, like *Thamar*; nor a Window-Wife, like *Jezabel.*

Phideas when he drew a woman, painted her ſitting under a Snaile-ſhell, that ſhe might imitate that little Creature that goes no farther then it can carry it's houſe upon it's head.

How many women are there that are not labouring Bees, but Idle Drones; that take up a Room in the Hive, but bring no honey to it; that are Moths to their Husbands eſtates; ſpending, when they ſhould be ſparing? As the mans part is to provide induſtrouſly, ſo the Womans is to preſerve diſcreetly; the one muſt not be carleſly wanting, the other muſt not be cauſleſly waſting: the man muſt be ſeeking with diligence, the woman muſt be ſaving with providence. The Cock and the Hen both ſcrape together in the duſt-heap, to pick up ſomething for their little Chickens.

To wind up this on a ſhort bottom.

1. If the woman be a help to the man, then let not the man caſt dirt on the woman.

Secundus being asked his opinion of a woman, ſpeaks thus, *Viri naufragium, domus tempeſtas, quietis impedimentum,*

pdimentum, &c. But surely he was a Mon-
ſter, and not a man, fitter for a Tomb t
bury him, then a womb to bear him.

Some have ſtiled them to be,
Like Clouds in the Skey.
Like Motes in the Sun.
Like Snuffs in the Candle.
Like Weeds in the Garden.

It is not good to play the Butcher wit
that naked Sex that hath no armes but fo
imbraces. A Preacher ſhould not be ſilen
for thoſe who are ſilenced from Preaching
becauſe they are the weaker veſſels, ſhall the
be broken all to pieces? Thou that ſaye
women are evil, it may be thy expreſſio
flows from thy experience; but I ſhall neve
take that Mariner for my Pilot, that hath n
better knowledge then the ſplitting
his own Ship. VVilt thou condem
the frame of all for the faults of one
as if it were true Logick, becauſe ſome a
evil therefore none are good. He hath
eyes that diſdains all objects. To blaſt th
helper, is to blame thy Maker. In a wor
we took our riſe from their bowels, and ma
take our reſt in their boſomes.

2. Is the woman to be a help to the man
Then let the man be a help to the woma
What makes theſe Debters be ſuch ill Pa
Maſters? but becauſe they look at what
owing to them, but not at what is owing
them? If thou wouldſt have thy wifes rev

ren

rence, let her have thy reſpect. To force a fear from this relation, is that which neither befits the Husbands authority to injoyn, nor the wifes duty to perform. A wife muſt not be ſharply driven but ſweetly drawn. Compaſſion may bend her, but compulſion will break her. Husband and Wife ſhould act towards each other with conſent, not by conſtraint.

There are four things wherein the Husband is a meet help to the wife.

Firſt, In his protecting of her from injuries. It's well obſerved by one, that the rib of which woman was made, was taken from under the mans arm: as the uſe of the arme is to keep off blows from the body, ſo the office of the Husband is to ward off blows from the wife; The wife is the Husbands Treaſury, and the husband ſhould be the wifes Armory. In darkneſs he ſhould be her Sun for direction; in danger he ſhould be her ſhield for protection.

Secondly, In his providing for her neceſſities. The Husband muſt communicate maintenance to the wife, as the head conveys influence to the members; Thou muſt not be a Drone, and ſhe a drudg. A man in a Married eſtate, is like a Chamberlain in an Inn, there's knocking for him in every room. Many perſons in this condition, waſt that eſtate in Luxury, which ſhould ſupply their wives neceſſity. *Nec amor viget mariti, nec*

fides Christiani, they have neither the faith of a Christian, nor the love of a Husband. It's a sad spectacle to see a Virgin sold with her own money unto slavery, when Services are better than Marriages; the one receives Wages, whil'st the other buyes their fetters.

3. In his covering of her infirmities. Who would trample upon a Jewel because it's fallen in the dirt? or throw away a heap of Wheat, for a little Chaff? or despise a Golden Wedge, because it retains some dross? These Roses have their prickles. Now husbands should spread a mantle of charity over their Wives infirmities. They be ill Birds that defile their own nests. It's a great deal better you should fast, than feast your selves upon their failings. Some husbands are never well, longer then they are holding their fingers in their wives sores. Such are like Crows, that fasten onely upon carrion. Do not put out the Candle, because of the Snuff. If the Gold be good, allow it *Grains*. Husbands and wives should provoke one another to love, and they should love one another notwithstanding of provocation. Take heed of poysoning those Springs, from whence the streams of your pleasure flows.

4. By

4. By his delighting in her Society: A wife takes Sanctuary, not onely in her Husbands houſe, but in his heart. The Tree of love ſhould grow up in the family, as the Tree of Life grew up in the Garden. They that chooſe their love ſhould love their choyce. They that Marry where they affect not, will affect where they marry not. Two joyned together without love, are but two ty'd together to make one another miſerable. And ſo I paſs to the laſt ſtage of the text, *a help meet.*

A help, there's her fulneſs; a *meet help*, there's her fitneſs.

The Angels were too much above him, the Creatures were too much below him; he could not ſtep up to the former, nor could he ſtoop down to the latter: The one was out of his reach, the other was out of his race: but the woman is a parallel line drawn equal with him: meet ſhe muſt be in three things.

1. In the Harmony of her diſpoſition. Husband and Wife ſhould be like the Image in a looking-glaſs that anſwers in all properties to the face that ſtands before it; or like an Eccho that returneth the voice it re[illegible]eth. Many marriages are like putti[illegible]ew Wine into old botles. An old man is not a meet help for a young Woman.

He

He that sets a gray head upon green shoulders, hath one foot in the Grave, and another in the Cradle. Yet how many times do you see the spring of youth, wedded to the winter of old age? A young person, is not a meet help for an old woman; raw flesh is but an ill plaister for rotten bones. He that in his non-age, marries another in her dote-age, his lust hath one wife in possession, but his love another in reversion.

2. In the Herauldry of her condition. Some of our Europian Nations, are so strict in their junctions, that its against their laws, for the Commonalty to couple with the Gentry.

It was well said by one: If the wife be too much above her husband, she either ruines him by her vast expences, or reviles him with her base reproaches: If she be too much below her husband, either her former condition makes her too generous, or her present muration, makes her too imperious.

Marriages are stiled matches, yet amongst those many that are Married, how few are there that are matched? husbands and wives are like locks and keys, that rather break then open, except the wards be answerable.

3. In the holiness of her Religion. If adultery may separate a Marriage contracted, Idolatry may hinder a marriage not perfected. Cattel of diverse kinds were not to [illegible]der, 2 Cor. 6. 14. *Be not unequally yoked* [illegible] 6. It's dangerous taking her for a wife, who will

will not take God for a husband. It is not meet that one flesh should be of two spirits. Is there never a Tree thou likest in the Garden, but that which bears forbidden fruit? There are but two Channe s in which the remaining streams shall run.

1. To those men that want wives, how to choose them.

2. To those women that have Husbands, how to use them.

First, To those men that want wives, how to choose them.

Marriage is the tying of such a knot, that nothing but death can unloose. Common reason suggests so much, that we should be long a doing that which can but once be done. Where one design hath been gravelled in the Sands of delay, thousands have bin split upon the Rock of Precipitance. Rash adventures, yields little gain. Opportunities are not like tides, that when one is past, another returnes; but yet take heed of flying without your wings; you may breed such Agues in your bones, that may shake you to your graves.

1. Let me preserve you from a bad choice.

2. Present you with a good one.

1. To preserve you from a bad choice. Take that in three things.

1. Choose not for Beauty,

2. Choose not for Dowry.

3. Choose not for Dignity.

He

He that looks for Beauty, buys a Picture.

He that loves for Dowry, makes a purchase.

He that leaps for Dignity, matches with a multitude at once.

The first of these is too blind to be directed,

The second, too base to be accepted.

The third, too bold to be respected.

1. Choose not by your eyes.
2. Chose not by your hands.
3. Choose not by your ears.

First, Choose not by your eyes, looking at the beauty of the person. Not but that this is lovely in a woman, but that this is not all for which a woman should be beloved. He that had the choice of many faces, stamps this Character upon them all; *favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain.* The Sun is more bright in a clear Sky, than when the Horizon is cloud d. But if a womans flesh hath more of beauty, than her spirit hath of Christianity; its like poison in sweet-meats, most dangerous, *Gen. 6. 2. The Sons of God saw the Daughters of men that they were fair, &c.* One would have thought, that they should rather have look d for grace in the heart, then for the beauty in the face. Take heed of Inning at the fairest signes. The Swan hath black flesh under her white feathers.

Secondly,

Secondly, Chooſe not by your hands, for the bounty of the portion.

When *Cato's* Daughter was asked, why ſhe did not Marry, ſhe thus replyed; ſhe could not find the man that loved her perſon above her portion. Men love curious pictures, but they would have them ſet in Golden frames. Some are ſo degenerate, as to think any to be good enough, who have but goods enough. Take heed, for ſometimes the bag and Baggage go together. The perſon ſhould be a figure, and the portion a Cypher, which added to her, advances the ſum, but alone ſignifies nothing. When *Themiſtocles* was to marry his daughter, two Suitors courted her together, the one rich and a fool, the other wiſe, but poor; and being demanded which of the two he had rather his daughter ſhould have, he anſwered, *malem virum ſine pecunia, &c.* I had rather ſhe ſhould have a man without money, then money without a man.

Thirdly, Chooſe not by your ears, for the dignity of her parentage. A good old ſtock may nouriſh a fruitleſs branch. There are many Children who are not the bleſſings, but the blemiſhes of their parents. They are Nobly deſcended, but ignobly minded.

Such

Such was *Aurelius Antonius*, of whom it was said, that he injured his Country in nothing, but in being the Father of such a Child. There are many low in their descents, that are high in their deserts. Such was the Coblers Son, who grew to be a famous Captain; when a great person upbraided the meanesse of his original, my nobility (saith he) begins with me, but thy Nobility ends with thee. Piety is a greater honour then Parentage. She is the best Gentlewoman that is heir of her own deserts, and not the degenerated off-spring of anothers vertue.

2. To present you with a good choice; in three things.

1. Choose such a one as will be subject to your dominion. Take heed of yoking your selves with untamed Heifers

2. Choose such a one as may sympathize with you in your affliction. Marriage is just like a Sea-Voyage, he that enters into this Ship, must look to meet with stormes and tempests. 1 *Cor.* 7. 28. *They that marry shall have trouble in the flesh.* Flesh and trouble are married together, whether we marry or no, now a bitter cup is too much to be drunk by one mouth. A heavy burthen is easily carried by the assistance of other shoulders. Husband and wife should neither be proud flesh, nor dead flesh. You are fellow-members therefore should have a fellow-

ow-feeling. While one ſtands ſafe on the hore, the other ſhould pity him that is toſt on the Sea. Sympathy in ſuffering, is like a dry houſe in a wet day.

3. Chooſe ſuch a one as may be ſerviceable to your ſalvation. A man may think he hath a Saint when he hath a Devil, but take heed of a Harlot that is falſe to thy bed, and of a Hypocrite, that is falſe to thy God.

Secondly, To thoſe women that have Husbands, how to uſe them In two thing.

1. Carry your ſelves towards them with obedience. Let their power command you, that their praiſe may commend you. Though you may have your husbands hearts, yet you muſt not have their heads. as you will his love, ſo you ſhould love his will. Till the husband leave commanding, the wife muſt never leave obeying. As his injunctions muſt be lawful, ſo her ſubjection muſt be loyal.

2. With faithfulneſs. In Creation, God made not one woman for many men, nor many women for one man: Every wife ſhould be to her husband, as *Evah* was to *Adam*, a whole World of women; and every husband ſhould be to his wife, as *Adam* was to *Evah*, a whole World of men. When a River is divided into many channels, the main current ſtarve.

To

To conclude: good servants are a great blessing; good Children a greater blessing; but a good wife is the greatest blessing: and such a help let him seek for her that wants one, let him sigh for her that hath lost one, let him take pleasure in her that enjoyes one. *And the Lord God said, It is not good &c.*

FINIS.